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BACON-WRAPPED SCALLOPS MAKE AN EASY — AND IMPRESSIVE — APPETIZER PAGE 14

These screens have ruined my ability to ... um ... uh ...

Canadian smartphone users say they spend 90% of free time staring at a screen PAGE 6

Eastern U.S. could look to Alaska to escape cold

Polar vortex reaches the southern states — Juneau warmer than Atlanta PAGE 8

Big names left off Olympic hockey squad

Team Canada brass defend choice to cut St. Louis and Giroux and select Carter and Kunitz PAGE 17

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Wanted: A few good women

Women In Politics.
With a female exodus from London city council, activists are trying to encourage more women to seek office

MIKE DONACHIE
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There's an exodus of women from city hall as London prepares for its municipal election.

Of the five women on the 15-member council, three — Nancy Branscombe, Judy Bryant and Joni Baechler — have confirmed they won't run again.

And that's been causing a stir, with women's activists determined to redress the balance but others, including sitting Coun. Sandy White, saying politics isn't about gender.

Instead, folks like White say it's about the best person for the job.

Baechler, who's ending 14 years as a city councillor, said women must have a voice. She pointed to the United Nations advice that 30 per cent of candidates should be women before a female perspective is properly represented.

Although London's council does meet that minimum, at least for now, the province sits at 24.7 per cent. Baechler fears that, unless more women come forward, the Forest City will fall even shorter of meeting the mark.

Who's in, who's out

- **Leaving city hall:** Couns. Judy Bryant, Nancy Branscombe and Joni Baechler
- **Incumbents running again:** Couns. Denise Brown and Sandy White
- **Hoping to join them:** Virginia Ridley in Ward 10, and ready to duke it out in Ward 13, Fiona Graham and Tanya Park
- As of Tuesday, 18 people had registered to run in London's Oct. 27 election. Just four of them are women. White hasn't filed papers yet, but says she intends to be on the ballot.

"I think it really is important that women do think hard about wanting to run for office and step forward when they have any interest," said Baechler. "We can't lose that perspective on council when it comes to policy-making."

Although she stresses there shouldn't be a "quota" of women involved, Baechler is already mentoring possible successors. She's leading London's role in Headstart, a provincial campaign that organizes events encouraging women to consider running for office.

Baechler's also the next speaker at Women In Politics, a local group with similar aims. An offshoot of the grassroots group Pints and Politics, members will hear Baechler speak about her political career at Chaucer's Pub starting at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 20.

Women In Politics coordinator Shawna Lewkowitz shares Baechler's concerns.

"I think that a really important thing is for everybody to ask women they know in their community who would be good for city council to run," said Lewkowitz. "Research has shown that women need to be asked more than men before they agree to run."

And they should be supported when they're running, she added, with finances, volunteer help and, of course, votes.

Not everyone shares that view.

Ward 13 candidate Fiona Graham said it's "ridiculous" to focus on gender and it risks diverting attention from London's real problems.

Coun. Sandy White said good work has been done on getting women involved, but the focus should be on the best candidates, whether they're women or men.

But some said women do face more barriers.

Ward 10 candidate Virginia Ridley and Ward 13's Tanya Park, who filed nomination papers Tuesday, both have young children and will rely on their husbands' support as they run.

"It's been a male-dominated area and the environment hasn't been conducive for women," said Ridley. "There are a lot of barriers. Personally, I think it's time for that to change."

A woman among men: Coun. Judy Bryant was the only female politician sitting when council's corporate services committee met Tuesday in council chambers. Some are worried too few women are showing an interest in local political seats. ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

NEWS

After the blaze

St. Thomas clinic reopens

It was a good end to a bad year for Clinic 217, the St. Thomas methadone clinic that was burned to the ground in an enormous Dec. 12 fire.

With nothing left but ashes, patients were shuttled to a clinic on Dundas Street in London on a daily basis while frantic arrangements were made to find another St. Thomas location.

That took all of 18 days.

A new clinic is now open at 475 Talbot St., about four blocks away from the original location.

Office manager Laura Butler said none of the clinic's roughly 400 clients had to go without treatment during the transition.

"They did good," she said. "We shuttled them to London almost every day and nobody had any complaints."

It was a much happier Butler than the one Metro spoke with as smoke poured out of her clinic nearly a month ago. At the time, she was crestfallen and concerned about what would happen to the people who depend on the clinic.

The fire also gutted a plumbing business and an auto parts store. A St. Thomas fire prevention officer said the cause of the blaze was a candle that had fallen in Big John's Plumbing. A separate fire only hours earlier had burned down a mill directly behind the clinic. The mill was scheduled to be demolished. SCOTT TAYLOR/METRO

A social worker dispenses a dose of methadone from a clinic pharmacy. London's rules governing methadone clinics are coming under fire.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

Methadone request leaves councillor upset

Human rights. Commissioner's demand for information ruffles feathers

A request from the province's human rights watchdog didn't go over well Tuesday at city hall.

"We're just trying to do our job," said Coun. Joe Swan as the difficult issue of regulating methadone clinics reared its head at the corporate services committee.

That regulation, said a letter from the Ontario Human Rights Commission, might be leading the city to discriminate against drug addicts.

The commission has asked for a large amount of documentation from the city as it seeks to decide whether people's rights are being affected by city rules governing methadone clinics and pharmacies.

The request left Swan unhappy with the suggestion that anyone's being discriminated against.

"I'm somewhat offended that (chief commissioner Barbara Hall) would suggest such a thing," the councillor said.

So, as staff get to work on drawing together all the paperwork, Swan suggested it might be accompanied by a letter explaining that council didn't like the tone of the request.

The request focuses on city planning and regulation bylaws, and seeks to find out if they "discriminate against people with addictions who rely on methadone services."

The city will be replying, solicitor Jennifer Smout told the committee, but the Feb. 7 deadline, given by the commission on Dec. 18, is tight. Clerk Cathy Saunders said the request represents four weeks of work for staff.

Smout said staff asked for more time, but the commission "has not been sympathetic," although they may be able to send some documents a little late.

MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

The request

- The Ontario Human Rights Commission wants to see pretty much everything about methadone health services in London since 2009.
- That includes all minutes, notes, presentation materials and other documents from city council meetings, sub-committees and consultations with the public and experts.

Community activists ready for Ward 13 battle

Two community activists have guaranteed a contest in one city council ward.

Already, social campaigner Fiona Graham had filed papers in a bid to gain the seat being vacated by Coun. Judy Bryant, who's not seeking re-election.

On Tuesday, Tanya Park, president of the SoHo Community Association, joined the race.

Park said she wants to continue Bryant's "good work."

But, like so many candidates out to join council for the first time, she also said she's running for change. Her formal campaign announcement speaks of "real concerns for the community" as her motivation to take a place at city hall.

"I am running to ensure that we as residents and business owners receive value for our tax dollars," the married mother-of-two said in a statement. "My goal is a safe, interesting and affordable place to live, work, and play. I intend to attract dynamic, successful, businesses that will boost our urban economy.

"I am running to defend the historical integrity of Ward 13 while encouraging development that complements it and the city of London."

Her involvement in the community association has included representing local views as the redevelopment of the South Street Hospital site was planned. She received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal for her community work.

Park is also a member of the Urban League of London and works for London Community Players as the box office manager of the Palace Theatre.

Graham, the other Ward 13 candidate, is a florist and buildings restoration worker who has campaigned for improvements in Old East Village.

She describes herself as a sole parent of one child who was born and raised in London. She lived in various parts of Canada and the U. S. before returning home in the 1990s.

MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

Panelists arranged by the London Multicultural Club address a room of newcomers to Canada last month, offering advice on how best to integrate and find work in their chosen professions. METRO FILE

Speed up immigrant processing: Report

EOI. Canada risks losing good workers to rival countries like Australia

A report issued Tuesday by the Ontario and London chambers of commerce calls on the federal government to dramatically shorten the length of time it takes to process immigrants entering Canada.

The report provides advice to the federal government as it finalizes the design of the Expression of Interest (EOI) system, a new process for selecting and processing the majority of immigrants to Canada.

To be introduced in early 2015, EOI is designed to give employers a larger role in selecting newcomers before they arrive. It's hoped many immigrants will have jobs locked up beforehand, but the government has to move quicker if that's to happen, some say.

"What we're suggesting in our recommendations in this report is you've got to be faster," said London Chamber of Commerce CEO Gerry Macartney. "If we don't lead the pack, or at least keep pace with the pack, we're going to lose the ability to attract these people to this country."

Speed is the single most important factor in determining whether employers will participate in the EOI system, according to the report.

The Canadian government is proposing a six-month processing time under the EOI system. At least one other country is moving faster — in Australia, visas for permanent residence are processed within 58 days, the report says.

Speed it up, Macartney, warned, or lose the best of the best to Australia, where they'll settle into a job and their new life there far more easily.

SCOTT TAYLOR/METRO

By the numbers

- Immigrants make up 21.2 per cent of London's population.
- Of the immigrants living in London in 2011, almost 15 per cent had arrived in Canada in the last five years.
- London's population speaks about 100 different languages, according to the 2011 Census.

Holistic help takes off

She asked for help from an airline, and an airline delivered.

Katie Christie, a former Western University student, is "healing with food and love" through her organization, Global Holistic Healing.

Originally from Winnipeg, she's now studying at the Institute of Holistic Nutrition in Toronto, as well as trying to help people in Latin America.

As Metro reported last month, Christie has been visiting people in need in Peru, Ecuador and other places, leading yoga and meditation sessions. She's also raising money to set up self-help projects like planting fruit trees near schools to provide a simple source of food, and sending donations of clothes to villagers.

Now, Christie is thrilled after WestJet provided an "act of kindness" by letting her bring six suitcases of donations at no charge, plus cutting her own flight costs.

Katie Christie METRO

It happened on Dec. 23 as she was heading to the Dominican Republic as part of her good works.

"They loved the concept of spreading kindness and paying it forward," Christie said.

Staff provided a "buddy pass" that let her get from Winnipeg to the Dominican Republic for $100.

"I really want to share this wonderful story to recognize WestJet for their good doings, so that other companies can get ideas of doing more acts of kindness, and how that will actually come back to you," Christie added. "I'd also like to show people that when you follow your heart and your intentions are to help people, miracles happen." MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

Get in touch

Katie Christie's looking to connect with other people who support good causes. Contact her through globalholistichealing.org.

Charity

Get these baby cakes while you can

Jonesin' for Cake, run by Jessie Jones, is selling $5 novelty cakes in the shape of babies to help the children's hospital at London Health Sciences Centre. For full information, search for her business name on Facebook. METRO

Committee meeting

E-bingo draws critics to city hall

"I really do not think Londoners want to see their bingo halls become a gaming centre with alcohol and slot machines."

That was the opinion Dale Mackness, of London's Citizens Against Gambling Expansion, shared during a Tuesday public-participation meeting at council's corporate services committee.

Members of the community were invited to city hall to voice their opinions about electronic bingo, or E-bingo, being allowed in London.

Some stressed the positive benefits of increased revenue for local charities and a need to modernize in the face of declining numbers at local bingo halls. Others were worried E-bingo could lead to other forms of electronic gambling, wondering how the new revenue would be split between the government and local charities.

Coun. Bud Polhill was especially skeptical of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation overseeing the program.

"I can tell you right now, OLG isn't doing this because it's better for us," he said.

OLG representatives were invited to the meeting but not present. The committee recommended the issue be deferred to city staff until the OLG can provide further information. DAVID INGRAM/FOR METRO

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NASA and the brown dwarfs. Western expert studies giant space storms

The weather in London may be causing some problems, but one Western University researcher has his mind on the weather elsewhere.

Stanimir Metchev, associate professor in the physics and astronomy department, has been watching the skies.

He's the principal investigator in research into heavenly bodies called "brown dwarfs," which form like stars but don't turn into fully-fledged stars. They're the bigger brothers of gas-giant planets like Jupiter.

Metchev's leading the study of their giant storms using NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope, which orbits the sun and was launched more than 10 years ago.

"As the brown dwarfs spin on their axis, the alternation of what we think are cloud-free and cloudy regions produces a periodic brightness variation that we can observe," said Metchev said. "These are signs of patchiness in the cloud cover."

The research results were revealed Tuesday at the 223rd annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Washington by Metchev's colleague, Aren Heinze, of Stony Brook University in New York.

Scientists think that the cloudy regions on brown dwarfs take the form of torrential storms, winds and, possibly, lightning.

In a Spitzer program named Weather on Other Worlds, astronomers used the infrared space telescope to watch 44 brown dwarfs as they rotated on their axis for up to 20 hours.

The gaps in cloud cover came as a surprise, as did the revelations about how the brown dwarfs rotated.

The work may lead to a better understanding of brown dwarfs and gas-giant planets.

MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

'Damage control'? Wynne's ice-storm response kicking up a stir at Queen's Park

The Opposition says Kathleen Wynne acted more like the mayor of Toronto than the premier of Ontario following the pre-Christmas ice storm that knocked out power to 600,000 homes and businesses in the province.

The Progressive Conservatives say Wynne ran around Toronto with photographers in tow as she handed out food baskets to people who had lost power, but did nothing for people in other communities who also had no electricity.

PC critic Lisa MacLeod says Wynne was so anxious to be seen doing something for Toronto she rushed out a grocery gift-card program to help replace lost food but without assessing the needs to determine who should get the money.

The New Democrats say the government ignored years of warnings about the need to better protect Ontario's electricity system from extreme weather events, and should have been prepared with an emergency plan for a faster recovery.

NDP energy critic Peter Tabuns says Wynne was doing "damage control" by handing out food baskets to some Toronto residents, but never showed up at cold, dark highrises in his riding where seniors were stranded on upper floors.

Premier Kathleen Wynne delivers a grocery hamper to Toronto residents who were without power for 157 hours. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

Wynne has yet to comment on the gift-card program, but defended it in an op-ed piece in the Toronto Star today, saying she felt she had to do something to help people after the ice storm.

The grocery cash cards, $50 for individuals and $100 for families, are being distributed in nine areas outside Toronto starting today, including Hamilton and the regions of Peel, Halton, Waterloo and York, as well as Dufferin County. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A bus makes its way along Richmond Street on Tuesday afternoon after a day of challenges for the city fleet. SCOTT TAYLOR/METRO

City buses left out in the cold

Weathering winter's wrath. Frigid temps, blowing snow make for harsh opponents to public transit

SCOTT TAYLOR
scott.taylor@metronews.ca

The tweets started early about a London bus stuck in a snowdrift on Wonderland Road.

Like a beached whale, the bus rolled this way and that trying to free itself, but the effort proved fruitless. A tow truck was eventually dispatched long after riders had been shuttled away.

In short, Tuesday's bitter cold and drifting snow proved to be taxing for the city's fleet.

Many buses were behind schedule, something London Transit Commission general manager Larry Ducharme chalked up as a consequence to the extreme cold and blowing snow that settled in as the morning commute began.

He said harsh weather plays a role in the fluidity of service and the number of passengers waiting on the next bus.

"It's not so much the cold as it is the snow," he said of the 15 centimetres dumped on the city Sunday night, which was followed by the frigid temperatures and accompanying wind chill. "The volume of ridership is directly linked to the external activity.

"For example, if (Western) and Fanshawe close, or if the schools or major employers close, obviously we transport less. If no one closes, we tend to transport more because people choose to take the bus versus drive."

As for the hapless bus on Wonderland Road, these things can happen in poor weather, Ducharme said. The driver did what he could to free the bus, but that's part of the risk of driving in January.

"When we have winter weather conditions, particularly when there's substantial drifting snow involved, getting in and out of bus bays can be problematic," Ducharme said. "(But) it takes a substantive amount for us not to operate, but we don't operate with the normal efficiency as we do in spring or summer conditions."

On social media

A sampling of LTC chatter that graced Twitter on Tuesday:

- **@JenKevDev:** "I called LTC and a service truck was sent out. The #10Wonderland bus is now on its way!"
- **@hclarkie:** "Had THE BEST bus driver today. Put the biggest smile on my face! As much as the bus system frustrates me, some bus drivers are awesome."
- **@TaylorC_2012:** "You know what I like? When the bus shows up when it says it's supposed to. Come on LTC, I got places to go."

Warming up the big chill

Looking to the calendar for hope, heat

OK, it's cold enough to freeze the walnuts off your Chunky Monkey ice cream, but that doesn't mean all hope for warmer days is lost.

It may feel like the dead of winter, but things are actually on the upswing. You just have to know where to look.

Here's an optimist's view on winter.

12 That's how many more minutes of daylight we're seeing since Dec. 21, the shortest day of the year. And the days are just going to get longer one after the other for the next five-and-a-half months.

25 Days until Wiarton Willie tells us how much more winter we'll get.

36 Number of days until Major League Baseball spring training camps officially open.

44 Number of days until the London Boat, Fishing and Outdoor Show, which speaks of all things warm, opens at the Western Fair District.

71 Days until spring starts on May 20.

197 Number of days until Rock the Park turns the amps up to 11 for its three-day festival — a summer staple — of fun and all things loud. By then it should be about 50 C warmer than it was Tuesday. We hope. SCOTT TAYLOR/METRO

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Did you look up from a screen to read this?

Odds are you did, says a recent report. Half of Canadians say they spend close to 90% of their free time staring at a TV, tablet or smartphone

Canadian smartphone owners estimate they spend an average of nearly 90 per cent of their free time staring at one of the many screens they own, suggests a recently released report.

In an online poll of 28,000 Canadians — conducted in August by Ipsos on behalf of Google — half the respondents said they owned a smartphone. Of the smartphone users, 99 per cent also had a computer, 88 per cent had a TV, and 39 per cent had a tablet.

Smartphone owners admitted that they'd peg their screen time, including watching TV, using a computer, tablet or e-reader at about 86 per cent of their free time.

On the flip side, they figured they spent only 14 per cent of their leisure time daily listening to the radio, reading a printed page or enjoying other non-digital activities.

On average, smartphone owners said they spent about an hour and a half each day on their phone for personal use, with about 56 per cent happening outside the home.

Tablet owners said they were using their device for about an hour and 15 minutes daily, and three-quarters of that usage was at home.

Canadian smartphone owners spend an average of about 86 per cent of their free time looking at one of their many screens, a recently released poll suggests. ISTOCK

On the other hand...

Multi-tasking users were most likely to be on their phone while watching TV, followed by a pairing of using their phone and their computer together, and then using their tablet while channel surfing.

- Half of all TV viewers said they always have their phone, tablet or computer with them while looking for something to watch.

Computer users said they spent three hours and 10 minutes working or playing on a PC daily in their personal time, including an hour away from home.

When asked about using their devices simultaneously — for example, swiping and tapping on a phone or tablet while watching TV — 87 per cent said they do it at least once a week.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver. Protesters who disrupted Harper event won't be charged

Vancouver police say they won't be pursuing criminal charges against two climate-change protesters who came within touching distance of Prime Minister Stephen Harper on a stage at an event in Vancouver.

The protesters, who have publicly identified themselves as Sean Devlin and Shireen Soofi, walked on stage during a Vancouver Board of Trade question-and-answer event at a downtown hotel on Monday.

They were quickly removed and the event carried on, but the stunt raised questions about how two activists could get that close to Harper.

Sgt. Randy Fincham said Vancouver police consulted with the RCMP and decided not to recommend charges.

"After consultation with both (the RCMP and the Crown), it was determined that it wasn't in the public's best interest to pursue an investigation into criminal charges," Fincham said in an interview Tuesday.

On Monday, the activists each held up a sign attacking Harper's record on climate change. One sign said "Climate Justice Now," while the other featured a dark line crossed through the phrase "Conservatives Take Climate Change Seriously." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's security keeps watch during his arrival at the Shell Aerocentre during his Western tour in North Saanich, B.C., Monday. CHAD HIPOLITO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

U.S. woman who assisted with mom's suicide gets time served

Shirley Vann, left, her daughter Linda Jean McNall and their two dogs are shown in this family photo. A U.S. mental health advocate hopes an Arizona woman who admits she helped her mother commit suicide in Canada will continue to get care if she's deported. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HANDOUT

An Alberta judge has agreed that an American woman who pleaded guilty to helping her mother kill herself should not have to spend any more time behind bars.

Judge Charles Gardener sentenced Linda Jean McNall to eight months of time already served on the rare charge of aiding suicide in the death of her 79-year-old mother, Shirley Vann. That was the recommendation made by both the Crown and the defence.

Court heard details about a suicide pact McNall made with Vann. Both had health problems and had cared for one another for decades.

Last spring, after Vann's health deteriorated, they sold their belongings, left behind mounting medical bills and drove from Sierra Vista, Ariz., to Canada's Rocky Mountains.

They pitched a tent near Hinton, 300 kilometres west of Edmonton, injected themselves and their two pet dogs with insulin, swallowed sleeping pills and opened a propane tank. Vann and the animals died, but McNall, 53, survived.

McNall, who had worked as a nurse, pleaded guilty to the crime last month. The sentence means McNall, who still suffers from depression and was being treated at Alberta Hospital, will be deported to Arizona.

McNall's lawyer, Laura Stevens, said her client will spend the night in jail in Edmonton and will be flown back to Phoenix on Wednesday. There, Stevens said, her client is scheduled to be evaluated by a case worker and a crisis management team.

Gardener noted the progress McNall had been making recently at Alberta Hospital after two more suicide attempts while there.

"I take some comfort that your condition is improving," he told McNall, who was seated in the prisoner's box. "I hope you will receive some ongoing treatment and comfort ... and that you eventually find worth and value in your life."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta. Man likely to face attempted murder charge after shootout with RCMP

RCMP say a man who was wounded in a shootout with Mounties on a farm east of Edmonton will likely face attempted murder and firearms charges.

One officer had his arm grazed by a bullet and another was run over by a truck driven by the suspect, who had been hiding in a shed.

The officer who was run over suffered broken bones and internal injuries and was undergoing surgery at an Edmonton hospital Tuesday afternoon.

Police said a couple arrested on the farm with the alleged gunman were later released without being charged.

The alleged gunman was in hospital being treated for gunshot wounds.

The wounded suspect was arrested after a lengthy standoff.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mexico City

2 Canadian women arrested in alleged firebomb attack

Two Canadian women have been arrested in Mexico City in connection with a firebomb attack on a government transportation department office and a car dealership. A Mexican man was also detained.

Prosecutors say the three face possible charges of causing damages to the office and the nearby car dealership.

The motive in the attack was not immediately clear.

Some Mexico City banks have been hit in recent years by small incendiary devices.

Those attacks have been attributed to small groups of leftists or animal rights activists. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Congrats! Washing machine gives birth to fully grown man

Oil's well that ends well. Nude Australian extricated from washer using prized olive oil

A naked Australian man who became stuck in a washing machine as part of an ill-planned practical joke was freed from the appliance with the help of an unusual rescue device: olive oil.

The 20-year-old man, identified only as "Laurence," told Australia's Fairfax Radio that he was on his way to take a shower on Saturday when he decided to climb into the top-loader to have a bit of fun. The fun quickly evaporated, however, when he realized he couldn't budge.

He called out to his friend for help, who rang the police. They responded to the scene, along with firefighters, paramedics and a search-and-rescue squad.

"He was very well wedged in there, and we were concerned for his health and well-being," Shepparton Police Sgt. Michelle De Araugo told the Shepparton News. "It was just a game gone wrong. It would be fair to say the gentleman was very embarrassed."

Priorities

"I was quite disappointed they used my good olive oil."

Would-be prankster 'Laurence'

Rescuers tried in vain to pull Laurence from the machine. But when it became clear he was seriously stuck, they grabbed a bottle of his favourite olive oil to help lubricate his escape.

The oil worked, and he popped out.

"I was quite disappointed they used my good olive oil," Laurence told Fairfax Radio. "As soon as the washing machine went on its side, it was a bit like a birthing." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Can't-sea otter finds safe home at Vancouver Aquarium

Walter, a sea otter blinded by a shotgun in October, was moved from the Marine Mammal Rescue Centre to the Vancouver Aquarium on Tuesday after he was deemed not-releasable into the wild. The otter suffered multiple shattered bones in his flipper and needed oral surgery to treat damage caused by the shotgun pellets. Veterinarians were unable to save Walter's eyesight. SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/METRO IN VANCOUVER

Kraft at a loss for curds. Not-cheese may be not available for few weeks

Playoff parties may have one fewer dip option this year.

Kraft Foods says some customers may not be able to find Velveeta cheese over the next few weeks. A representative for the company, Jody Moore, didn't give any reasons for the apparent shortage, saying only that they happen from time to time given the "nature of manufacturing."

She noted that the lack of availability is more noticeable because of the seasonal demand during the NFL playoffs. The company has been airing TV commercials featuring a recipe for a chili con queso dip made with Velveeta.

Moore says it should be a short-term situation and that Kraft hasn't yet heard from any customers who are having problems finding the product. She did not say whether the company experienced a similar shortage last year.

Whey your options

The shortage affects only the Velveeta hard cheese products, but was not limited to a specific area.

- "It is possible consumers in any part of the country may not be able to find some Velveeta products," company representative Jody Moore said in an email.

The trade publication Ad Age reported the issue Tuesday, quoting an employee at a Brooklyn-area grocery store who didn't expect shipments again until February due to "a plant issue."

Kraft Foods Group Inc., based in Northfield, Ill., owns many brands, including Jell-O, Oscar Mayer and Maxwell House. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kraft Foods didn't give any reasons for the apparent shortage of Velveeta products over the next few weeks. PAUL SAKUMA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Dude, what did you eat? Radioactive diapers set off alarms at incinerator

Austrian hazmat specialists have discovered why gauges showed alarmingly high readings for a dump truck — radioactive adult diapers.

After unloading the truck, firefighters from the hazardous-materials unit of the city of Linz found nearly two dozen diapers from a hospital that had become contaminated with radioactive iodine. The substance is swallowed during some medical and diagnostic procedures.

While radiation levels were substantially above normal, officials say no one was in danger during Tuesday's incident.

However, the truck will stay in a metal container for eight days — the time it takes for the emissions to reach safe levels. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Big bell, tough sell

On a ring and a prayer — stolen bell worth $20,000 brought back to Anglican church

A bell worth more than $20,000 that was stolen from a Newfoundland and Labrador church has been returned.

Holy Innocents Anglican Church in Paradise says the 600-pound bell was taken from the church on Friday, prompting a public plea for its return.

Deacon Keith Sheppard says police were contacted on Monday by a scrap-metal business that had been approached to purchase the bell.

Sheppard says the bell, which has been slightly damaged, is back in their possession and stored away.

It was set to be installed on the church in the spring.

The police investigation is ongoing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Snowed in

Stranded trains arrive in Chicago

Hundreds of Amtrak passengers who spent the night aboard three trains stranded in snow in northern Illinois finally arrived in Chicago, rail line officials said Tuesday morning.

About 300 passengers on two trains that were stuck near Mendota, about 130 kilometres from Chicago, boarded buses in Princeton for the final leg of their trip, said Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari. They began arriving in downtown Chicago around 7 a.m. Tuesday and more were expected to arrive throughout the morning.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Icy seas

Chinese ship breaks free

A Chinese icebreaker that became trapped last week after coming to the rescue of a Russian research ship stuck in heavy sea ice in Antarctica broke free on Tuesday, state media reported. The Xue Long, or Snow Dragon, reported becoming trapped on Friday, a day after its helicopter rescued 52 scientists, journalists and tourists on board the Russian Akademik Shokalskiy, which got into trouble on Christmas Eve. They were then transferred to an Australian icebreaker to take them home. It escaped after making a 100-degree turn and pushing away the ice, thereby splitting it and opening up a channel of water. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Report

Disasters killed more people last year: Insurer

The German insurance company Munich Re says some 20,000 people died in natural disasters last year, about twice as many as in 2012.

Most of the deaths resulted from Typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines, Vietnam and China in November with a loss of almost 6,100 lives. Also taking a deadly toll were floods in India, which killed about 5,500 people in June. Munich Re's annual disasters report released Tuesday found that the economic cost of natural catastrophes was lower last year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Life-threatening polar freeze descends over parts of U.S.

Indiana. At least 15,000 people were without power early Tuesday, and officials warned some could be in the cold for days

Brutal cold settled over parts of the U.S., sending the mercury plummeting Tuesday from New York and Washington to Atlanta, Nashville and Birmingham, where many people have little experience dealing with freezing weather.

The morning weather map for the eastern half of the U.S. looked like an algebra worksheet: lots of small, negative numbers. In fact, the Midwest and the East were colder than much of Antarctica.

Georgia, where the temperature dropped into the single digits, was colder than many cities in Alaska. While Kodiak and Juneau registered 4 and Anchorage was at -2, Atlanta dipped to -14 degrees early in the morning, or nearly 17 degrees below the average low this time of year.

"This is severely cold for these parts," said Brian Lynn, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Peachtree City, Ga.

Farther south in Pensacola, Fla., a Gulf Coast city better known for its white sand beaches than frost, streets normally filled with joggers, bikers and people walking dogs were deserted early Tuesday as the morning remained in the negative teens. Downtown, Monica Anderson and Tommy Howard jumped up and down and blew on their hands while they waited for a bus, struggling to stay warm.

Anderson said she couldn't recall it ever being so cold.

"I'm not used to it. It is best just to stay inside until it gets better," said Anderson.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The cold weather makes vision challenging as Jobin Curoe's glasses fog up while walking in temperatures and wind chills reaching -40 to -50 on the Lawrence University campus on Monday.

SHARON CEKADA/THE POST-CRESCENT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prison brrr-eak

Fugitive too cold to get far, gives up

Just how cold is it in the U.S.? Apparently cold enough for an escaped prisoner to turn himself in. Authorities say the inmate escaped from a minimum security facility in Kentucky on Sunday. As temperatures dropped far below freezing Monday, they say he walked into a motel and asked the clerk to call police. Lexington police spokeswoman Sherelle Roberts says 42-year-old Robert Vick told the clerk he wanted to turn himself in and escape the arctic air. Roberts says Vick was checked out by paramedics and returned to Blackburn Correctional Complex.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Extreme cold causes delays at Toronto airport

Frustrated passengers line up during flight delays and cancellations due to extreme cold weather and wind chill at Pearson International Airport in Toronto on Tuesday. AARON VINCENT ELKAIM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Extreme cold in the Toronto area, where temperatures plunged to about -40 C overnight with the wind chill, caused a rash of delays and flight cancellations Tuesday at Pearson International Airport.

The airport put a so-called ground freeze on all North American arrivals through the morning, but it was lifted at 10 a.m. More than 600 flights were cancelled throughout the day and many more were delayed.

The freeze was put in place because of the extreme cold's effects on equipment and efforts to minimize time outdoors for employees, said Greater Toronto Airports Authority spokeswoman Shereen Daghstani.

"It was the extreme weather conditions that impacted safe operations and employee safety," she said. "When it comes to refuelling or removing the bags, those need to be done by employees."

The problems were reportedly compounded by a backlog of planes waiting for gates to open to off-load passengers, travellers waiting hours to collect their luggage and long lineups snaking through Pearson's terminals.

Robert Palmer, spokesman for WestJet, said the company's planes couldn't take off Monday night, creating a bottleneck at the gates.

"As soon as a gate became available, we would push a plane to that gate, we would let the people off. We did not take their baggage off because that would've taken extra time and meanwhile there was a lineup of people in planes waiting to get off the plane," he said.

Connie Smith said she'd dealt with several weather-related delays and missed connections on her journey from Edmonton back to her home in Newfoundland. She and her husband were stranded overnight in Toronto. "This is horrible, just the waiting and the lineups. It should be more organized," she said as her husband stood in line at a service counter.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sears pecks Canada Goose back over trademark lawsuit

Statement of defence.
Feathers are flying as retailers hiss at each other over allegations of selling knock-off parkas

Canada Goose parkas are known for a distinctive circular logo on its sleeve, fur hood and hefty price tag. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Canada Goose is trying to "bully" Sears Canada Inc. and other retailers through litigation, Sears is alleging in court documents as it hits back at a trademark infringement lawsuit.

The parka maker's real motive is to curtail the sales of lower-priced winter jackets so Canada Goose can keep selling its products "at a huge mark up" Sears alleges.

Canada Goose alleges in a lawsuit filed late last year that Sears is selling knock-offs of its highly distinctive coats.

The department store has now filed its statement of defence in Federal Court and is taking direct aim not just at this particular lawsuit, but what the retailer calls Canada Goose's "campaign of intimidation."

Canada Goose is trying to claim the exclusive right to sell any winter coat with a fur collar "of any sort" or with a circular logo on its sleeve, Sears alleges in its statement of defence. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Protecting its nest

- Canada Goose has previously sued International Clothiers Inc., alleging it intentionally designed a logo and positioned it on jackets to mimic the Canada Goose Arctic Program design trademark. The lawsuit was later settled on undisclosed terms.
- Sears is intentionally trying to mislead consumers into believing they're buying a "lower-end" Canada Goose jacket, the parka maker alleges in its lawsuit. In its statement of defence, Sears says no consumer could confuse a Canada Goose jacket with Sears' Alpinetek coats. Neither Sears' nor Canada Goose's allegations have been proven in court.

Apptacular sales

Apple's app store tops $10B in 2013

The Angry Birds Star Wars app helped Apple set records. SCREENGRAB

Apple says people spent more than $10 billion US in its app store last year, on apps such as Minecraft, Angry Birds Star Wars and Sleep Cycle alarm clock.

December was the most successful month in the store's history, as customers spent $1 billion US that month. Apple says the year's total was also a record.

There are more than a million apps available in the app store for the iPhone, the iPad and the iPod Touch. Besides games, there are newspapers, magazines, travel, business and health and fitness apps, among others.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Crystal (glass) clear sound

Members of the media photograph a glass speaker called Clio during the International Consumer Electronics Show, Sunday in Las Vegas. The speaker, produced by ClearView Audio, uses a single piece of curved millimetre-thick acrylic glass that sits on a dock which vibrates it in a finely tuned way so that it can play music. JULIE JACOBSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BlackBerry division aims to purrfect engine roar

For car lovers, there is just something about a revving engine that gets the blood moving faster.

Now automakers can capitalize on that feeling by teaming with a division of BlackBerry that is developing a way to replicate the sound of yesteryear's driving experience, even as cars become quieter and more fuel efficient.

QNX Software Systems — acquired by BlackBerry nearly four years ago — debuted a couple of concept cars on Tuesday at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

One is a modified Kia Soul hatchback that showcases a new technology called "engine sound enhancement." In its most basic form, it's a soundtrack that simulates the engine both inside the car and for people on the outside through speakers.

An interior view of a QNX concept car. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HANDOUT

For automakers, it's crucial to get a vehicle's sound right, Kuhn said. The challenge is that every automaker wants a different sound, and the purr — or roar — of an engine can be as much an act of branding as it's an exercise in authenticity. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Start your engines!

"They wanted their car to sound like the cross between a certain brand of bass guitar and a snow leopard."

QNX sales and marketing vice-president Derek Kuhn said, in a phone interview, one manufacturer was very particular when it asked musicians to enter a recording studio.

What was that?

Vehicles are lighter these days thanks to removing insulation and other parts that have grown to be unnecessary. A side effect is 'strange noises' not heard before.

- If a car doesn't make the right noises, then often drivers will think something is wrong with it, said QNX sales and marketing vice-president Derek Kuhn.

Concordia disaster

Ex-CEO of Costa Cruises retiring

Carnival Corp. said Tuesday that the former CEO of Costa Cruises, the company behind the Concordia disaster, is retiring.

Costa owns the Concordia cruise ship that capsized off the central Italian coast in early 2012. Pier Luigi Foschi was CEO at Costa Cruises when the Concordia slammed into a reef off an island with more than 4,000 people on board. Thirty-two people died.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 92.83¢ (-1.05¢)

TSX 13,596.93 (+101.39)

OIL $93.67 US (+$0.24)

GOLD $1,229.60 US (-$8.40)

Natural gas: $4.33 US (+$0.03)
Dow Jones: 16,530.94 (+105.84)

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

You have to feel sorry for Michael Bay.

Not because he's the director of epic Hollywood stinkers such as the Transformers movies and classic clunkers such as Pearl Harbour and Bad Boys II.

No, we have to send Michael a hug because he has suffered through the worst experience ever. There he was at the giant Consumer Electronics Show in Vegas on Monday, presenting on behalf of the 105-inch, curved-screen TV from Samsung, when he lost his place on the teleprompter and couldn't find it again.

After stammering and shuffling for the world's longest minute, he walked off the stage, leaving the Samsung guy holding the bag.

An ignominious retreat for the whiz kid who learned at the knees of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg to become one of the richest Masters of Tinsel Town, worth more than $400 million, according to Celebrity Net Worth.

The other reason we should feel sorry for Michael Bay is that nobody else is. Going mute at the world's foremost consumer electronics show is bad enough, but the peanut gallery is howling with delight.

Someone said he only did what so many before him have wanted to do: walk out of a Michael Bay production. Someone else observed that it was the first time he seemed uncomfortable without a script.

Whoa. Tough crowd.

And that's going to make it tougher for the 75 per cent of us who fear public speaking more than death itself. Yes, that's true. Glossophobia, as the fear of public speaking is called, is the No. 1 phobia, beating out the fear of death, and No. 3, fear of spiders. Jerry Seinfeld once observed that at a funeral, most of us would rather be in the casket instead of giving the eulogy.

Even if it's just standing in front of the class to spell glossophobia, most of us would rather die. My first real bout with stage fright happened in Grade 8, when I was required to stand in front of a packed school gym and play Moon River on the trombone. Somehow I got through the whole thing even though the sheet music kept slipping off the stand. But I kept thinking: there are two people in the audience who actually want to hear this, and I'm only sure about one of them (my mother).

No word on whether Michael Bay's mother was in the audience at CES, but it's a good idea for the jackals to remember that he has one, and she must be suffering agonies for her boy. For the sake of his mother, get off his case.

And if that doesn't move you to sympathy, you can at least learn from this ghastly experience. The next time you have to stand in front of an audience, before you go on, remember what happened to Michael Bay.

If that doesn't cause you to break into a flop sweat, nothing will.

ZOOM

Poached in their safe haven

COURTESY TIM WATTERS/SEA SHEPHERD AUSTRALIA

Protected whales seen captured

Activists have released rare photographs of protected whales killed by a Japanese fleet inside an internationally recognized ocean sanctuary.

Anti-whaling campaign group Sea Shepherd captured aerial footage of three minke whales' bloodied carcasses lying on the deck of Japanese vessel Nisshin Maru. METRO

Japan has loophole in moratorium

The images, purportedly taken inside the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary in Antarctica's Ross Dependency, have drawn international criticism from activists and politicians. Commercially hunting whales is banned in the region, but Japanese fleets allegedly capture the animals under a "scientific research" loophole in the moratorium on whaling. METRO

The image released by Sea Shepherd shows a bloodied deck of the Japanese whaling vessel Nisshin Maru. CONTRIBUTED

Surveillance

- The chairman of Sea Shepherd Australia says there is no oversight from the federal government.
- Last month, Australia's environment minister said there would be a plane sent to monitor the operation. Prior to the election, he said there would be a ship.

Clickbait

IRENE KUAN
Metro Online

Tech giants at the 2014 Consumer's Electronics Show in Las Vegas showed off their latest innovations in high-tech appliances from wireless, app-based plant monitors to a robot vacuum. Here are some highlights of home gadgets meant to make your life easier.

CONTRIBUTED

Parrot Flower Power wireless plant monitor:

Ever wonder if your plant is parched or when its light intensity or temperature isn't quite right? With the Parrot Flower device, you can monitor and analyze the growth conditions of your flowery friends via a Bluetooth-equipped sensor that sends information to your smartphone or tablet using an app.

Smart Hom-Bot vacuum system:

This high-tech vacuum system is meant to make your life more convenient with the ability to map out your home to ensure a more effective cleaning path. The duel lenses on the appliance can snap images of your home and can remember the positioning of objects to sense when an area is already clean. It can also help clean air in the home via a HEPA filter, according to LG.

Panasonic's nanoe wet dry hair dryer:

A hair dryer may not seem all that impressive next to the many high-tech devices and gadgets at CES, but what makes Panasonic's nanoe hair dryer stand out is that it has the ability to add moisture to hair while drying it. According to Panasonic, the dryer breaks blown ions down before infusing them with moisture so imagine drying your tresses without having to worry about drying them out.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: Team Canada announced its roster for Sochi Olympics. Who would you have liked to see make the cut?

@KurtPenner: I would have picked Marty St Louis! #heart #consistency #goals #speedy #jiltedlasttime

@BergysAWarrior: #Looch deserved to be on #TeamCanada who wouldn't want a guy that can change a game with either a huge hit or by scoring a highlight goal :(

@alexisannna: I'm so sad about #Seabs and #Crow not making team canada but on the bright side #Sharp, #Toews and #Keith made it. #Sochi2014 #TeamCanada

@kfox9611: #TeamCanada should've brought Joe Thornton.. Imagine he scored 4 goals in the Olympics... #JumboJoe

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: londonletters@metronews.ca

metro

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Grammys

Daft Punk GETTY IMAGES FILE

Daft Punk to perform with Stevie Wonder

For a group that had one of the top albums of the past year, Daft Punk has been keeping a low profile — even lower than the duo's disguise-happy public persona would suggest.

Since releasing their hit Random Access Memories in May, the helmeted ones haven't even performed live in front of an audience.

But when you're nominated for five Grammys, that's kind of a command performance, especially when one of those nominations is for Album of the Year.

In the grand tradition of unlikely Grammy pairings that actually make a lot of musical sense, Daft Punk will be performing with Motown legend Stevie Wonder, the show's executive producer Ken Ehrlich told Rolling Stone.

Rolling Stone also reported that Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers will perform with Daft Punk, so you can expect a rendition of their mega-hit, Get Lucky. METRO

Pack A.D. to engage new fans with Do Not Engage

Shift in sound.
Garage-rock duo push for a bigger audience with latest album

Vancouver garage-rock duo the Pack A.D., from left, Maya Miller and Becky Black. CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver garage-rock duo the Pack A.D. finally cleaved their way onto Canadian airwaves with 2011's Unpersons, a record that strayed far from the skeletal hard blues that marked their early work.

With Do Not Engage — out Jan. 28 — the band is pushing its newfound tunefulness even further, and the duo is blunt when asked to describe the shift in sound.

"Now our songs have things like choruses," said drummer Maya Miller during a recent chat in Toronto. "They never used to. Truthfully, they do have more melodies now."

Shedding their nascent primal-blues leanings almost completely, the Pack A.D. here channel the melodic fuzz of '90s post-grunge and lo-fi for a concise set of 11 songs that recall a range of influences including the Breeders, the Grifters and Superchunk.

There's still variety within that framework. "There's no real consistency but I kind of like that," singer Becky Black muses, but the common thread is a new accessibility.

And that pop craft arrived at a fortuitous time for the band, seemingly perched on the cusp of a breakthrough.

Since Unpersons came out, they became Juno Award nominees for breakthrough group (natch), signed with Nettwerk Records — such a sufficiently large label that Black marvels "there's a lot more people to remember" — and whisked their undomesticated live show across some larger stages, including a gig last month opening for the Arctic Monkeys.

Miller and Black acknowledge that a desire to capitalize on such opportunities did influence their songwriting.

"I think it obviously played a part in coming up with this album," Miller said.

"I also think people now can dance to our new album," she added. "I think it's been harder to dance to our music in the past. We used to have less opportunity for that. It was very odd music. It didn't really go anywhere. So maybe it's going somewhere."

If it sounds as though the pair is unhappy with their earliest work — 2008's Tintype and Funeral Mixtape — well, that's pretty accurate.

Those elemental recordings helped the duo gather a following, but they're not representative of where the group is at now.

"For me, I tried to think we didn't do those first two albums," Miller said. "Not in a really bad way, but it just feels like I don't even understand what we were doing then."

"I guess you have to look at it positively though," Black interjects. "The only reason the albums are better now is because they were bad in the beginning."

And that dissatisfaction pushed them to where they are now. THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the band's past albums

"There's nowhere to move with happiness. I think it's a terrible place to be. It's complacency. You do not grow from being happy."
Pack A.D. drummer Maya Miller

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Evan Peters and Emma Roberts ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

American Horror Story co-stars to wed — despite domestic abuse arrest

Evan Peters reportedly proposed to his American Horror Story co-star and girlfriend, Emma Roberts, over the holidays in New York before heading off to London for New Year's, according to People magazine.

The couple returned to the U.S. this week, with Roberts sporting a diamond on her ring finger.

Roberts, who has been dating Peters since 2012, was arrested on domestic violence charges last year after an incident that left Peters bloodied, though she was released a few hours later after he refused to press charges.

Kristen Bell

Bell takes a progressive approach to parenting

Kristen Bell is keeping a pretty progressive outlook when it comes to parenting 10-month-old daughter Lincoln, especially when it comes to sex.

"People ask, 'Oh, well you've done some sexy material. Do you want her to see that?' And I'm like, 'My guess is if she's anything like the other five billion people on the planet, she's going to grow up and enjoy sex, so I'm not going to be shocked by that,'" Bell tells Chelsea Lately.

"I just think you're setting yourself up for disaster if you try to keep them little. She's going to grow up. She has — newsflash — a vagina, and she's going to figure it out one day, and more power to her."

The Word

Twilight's Lutz on those Miley rumours

MEREDITH ENGEL
Metro World News

Ever since being spotted together at Beacher's Madhouse MGM around New Year's, The Legend of Hercules star Kellan Lutz has been linked with the world's most famous twerk monster, Miley Cyrus. But is there any truth to that rumour? We spoke to Lutz, who set the record straight.

"I adore the girl, and people assume stuff just because you're photographed at a party with multitudes of celebrities and public figures," he says.

"She's been a close friend of mine for years and we're friends. It's always great to hang out, especially with her being so busy and me being so busy.

"But the gossip and all these rumours that insiders say, they're funny because I don't look at these tabloids. ... I'm like, 'Where do people come up with this?' It's like people can just say 'insiders said' and then they can cover their butts that way. But no, she's an awesome girl and a really good friend."

So, folks, time to put away those fantasies of a tongue-wagging vampire baby.

Sean Penn

Charlize and Sean 'can't get enough of each other'

Sean Penn and Charlize Theron don't seem to be wasting any time with their new rumoured romance, reportedly spending nearly every day — and night — together since returning to L.A. on New Year's Day from a holiday getaway in Hawaii, according to E! News. "They are spending night after night together and moving very fast," a source says. "It seems like it's getting serious and they can't get enough of each other."

Zooey Deschanel

Zooey isn't having any of this girl-on-girl hate

Zooey Deschanel is just about fed up with the negative side of social media. "If there's one thing I'd like to graduate from, it's girl-on-girl hate. I don't believe in it," the New Girl star tells Elle magazine. "There has been a shift. I really have stood up for myself on multiple platforms. It's sort of the grown-up version of middle school nastiness, and I'm just like, come on."

Twitter

@samantharonson
Tried to be a human being and went to sleep before midnight, now I'm wide awake. Is this what you guys do? Now what?

@DanaDelany
lost 150 followers with Twitter update. Weird. Anyone else?

@SteveMartinToGo
I'd like to apologize for calling Polar Vortex winter. It's actually more of a spring.

Tulum's beach on the Riviera Maya in Mexico features not only beautiful sand but pure, aquamarine waters and the ruins of an ancient Mayan village. JIM BYERS/METRO

Tell the snow where to go

And say hello to sand. Thaw the winter chill with an overview of some great beaches

JIM BYERS
@jimbyerstravel
jimbyerstravel.com

What with ice storms and snow and cold snaps, we could all use a bit of sand and surf right about now. Here's a look at eight of my favourite beaches in North America and the Caribbean.

Trunk Bay, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands
Perhaps the prettiest beach I've ever seen, with incredible water and even an underwater snorkelling trail you can follow. There's hardly a building in sight, the water is calm and there are great views of the British Virgin Islands.

Napili Beach, Maui, Hawaii
A perfect crescent of soft sand on a beach where no building can go more than two stories high. Safe for kids at the north end and decent bodysurfing at the south end, plus awesome views of nearby Molokai.

Miami
Yeah, this is an obvious, easy one. But how can you resist the pretty people and great bars and the luscious Art Deco architecture? Try the SoHo Beach House for an artsy hotel stay or strut your stuff on Haulover Beach, one of the few legal nude beaches in the U.S.

Sugar Beach, St. Lucia
It's not big but it's flanked by glorious, jungle-clad, deep green outcroppings of rock called The Pitons. There's a great snorkelling reef that's a UNESCO heritage site.

Tulum, Mexico
If you get tired of checking out the pretty, young people cavorting in the aquamarine water, you can gaze at the lovely rock formations or soak in the view of Mayan ruins overlooking the sea.

Valley Church, Antigua
The soft, white sand goes on for a good long while and the beach is flanked by pretty green hills dotted with vacation homes. There's a nice beach bar called The Nest.

Capitola, Calif.
I once called this village the best California surf town The Beach Boys never sang about. There's a pier for viewing sea lions and surfers and rows of colourful homes on the sand.

Panama City Beach, Fla.
The weather's warmer further south, but the sand here is white as snow and soft as an angels' wings. Try Andy's Flour Power for a tremendous breakfast or head to the main pier, which extends hundreds of metres into the Gulf of Mexico and is directly across from a fun, outdoor shopping centre with rides and a kids' playground.

Hanalei Beach, Kauai, Hawaii
A gorgeous, long stretch on the north coast. It can be rainy here but the views of the nearby mountains are glorious. The beach was featured in the movie The Descendants with George Clooney.

Valley Church Beach on Antigua has lovely sand and smooth, clear waters. JIM BYERS/METRO

Trunk Bay in the U.S. Virgin Islands is one of the prettiest beaches around. ISTOCK

This recipe makes 12 to 14 scallops. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Luxury meets ease: Bacon-Wrapped Scallops

Appetizer. What do you do if unexpected guests pop up at your door? Serve this super simple dish

Bacon-wrapped scallops are one of the most luxurious appetizers you can serve, not to mention one of the easiest to prepare.

Because there are only two main ingredients in this dish, you need to make sure you use the best quality — the biggest, freshest sea scallops you can find, and the most flavourful bacon. After that, they are so easy to grill that you hardly need a recipe.

There are two types of scallops, but only one of them is appropriate for the grill.

Tiny bay scallops are so sweet, you can eat them raw or just lightly sautéed. But they also are more expensive and not suited for grilling. What you want are the larger, less expensive sea scallops.

This all-protein finger food appetizer is perfect for entertaining. It's simple to prep and quick to cook. You even could prepare them in advance.

Pre-cook the bacon to render some of the fat and make it soft and pliable for wrapping around the scallops. Then just refrigerate until your guests arrive and pop them on the grill when you want them.

They pair well with a simple maple-mustard sauce that is delicious dolloped on top of the scallops just before serving.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp whole-grain mustard
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 lb jumbo sea scallops
- 1/2 lb centre-cut bacon
- Salt and ground black pepper
- Round wooden toothpicks, soaked in water for 30 minutes

1. Heat the oven to 400 F. Set a wire rack over a rimmed baking sheet. Heat the grill to medium-high.

2. In a small bowl, mix together the mustard and maple syrup. Set aside.

3. Use paper towels to blot dry the scallops. Arrange them on a plate, then set aside.

Cooking tip

The scallops take very little time to cook, so you can cook the bacon in the oven or microwave for a couple of minutes before you wrap it around the scallops. That way, you are guaranteed to get crispy bacon and tender scallops.

4. Arrange the bacon in a single layer on the rack over the baking sheet. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until just starting to cook. Do not fully cook the bacon. Remove the bacon from the oven. If too hot to handle, let cool for several minutes. Once the bacon can be handled, wrap one slice of bacon around each scallop. Secure in place by threading one of the toothpicks through the bacon and scallop.

5. Use a pastry brush to lightly brush the tops and bottoms of the scallops with bacon fat from the pan. Season with salt and pepper. Grill for 2 to 3 minutes per side. Serve with the sauce for dolloping a bit onto each.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ELIZABETH KARMEL, AUTHOR OF SOAKED, SLATHERED AND SEASONED.

It's all in how you dress it up

We all know that baked white fish is a fast and healthy way to get dinner on the table, particular during this annual time of dietary vow renewal.

What isn't always quite so clear is how to prepare that white fish without adding tons of fat and calories or rendering it a tasteless hunk of protein. But it's all about what you top it with.

This recipe uses a pineapple-mint salsa that gets tons of flavour from not only its namesake ingredients, but also cilantro, jalapeno, onion and garlic.

The salsa is also great spooned over a baked sweet potato.

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 lbs haddock fillets
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 lb fresh pineapple flesh, cut into chunks
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 medium red onion, quartered
- 1/4 cup fresh mint
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro
- Juice of 1 lime
- Hot sauce, to taste

1. Heat the oven to 400 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil, then coat it with cooking spray.

2. Arrange the haddock fillets on the baking sheet, then brush them with a bit of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, then bake for 12 minutes, or until the fish flakes easily.

3. Meanwhile, in a food processor, combine the pineapple, jalapeno, onion, mint, cilantro and lime juice. Pulse until roughly chopped. Transfer to a bowl, then season with salt and pepper. Adjust heat by adding hot sauce, if desired. Serve the salsa over the haddock.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sussing out your sensational (and sizable) selection of job supporters

Reference check.
You can never have too many individuals singing your praise on the job hunt

MEGHAN GREAVES
Metro World News

It's not just about who you know, it's about the people you know who think you've got plenty to offer. ISTOCK

During your studies and the early stages of your work life, you'll develop relationships with all sorts of different individuals and you never know how these relationships may help you down the road when starting your career search.

Your part-time employer, a mentor that you had while completing a campus or school project, a career counsellor, a professor or a peer with whom you worked on a big project are all examples of people who can become useful professional connections.

How to do it

Ask as you go
One of the easiest ways to build your references is to treat the connection process as an ongoing activity. This will help you avoid scrambling to remember all your important contacts when you need them.

Be sure to ask your potential references if they would be willing to give you a professional or personal reference letter, depending on the situation, once your work with them is complete.

If you aren't sure about the strength of your connection, stay in contact and work on building a relationship through email.

Don't be afraid to ask
Asking someone for a reference doesn't have to be a daunting task — you've likely already established a good relationship with them.

Also, it isn't mandatory to ask for a reference face-to-face. Though this is the most formal way to ask for a reference, if the idea truly puts you out of your comfort zone or you can't meet with the person, over the phone or via email works well too.

Keep it brief
Asking for a reference shouldn't be a speech about your life and why you deserve a reference from the person. Explain why you'd like them to be a reference and ask if they're comfortable doing so.

You don't want to waste their time — let them guide the conversation.

Can't stop, won't stop

One of the easiest ways to build your references is to treat the connection process as an ongoing activity.

Why it's important to start now

Gives you credibility
Having references (you should aim to have at least three when applying for a job) shows that you have been able to take on multiple tasks and successfully complete them.

Volunteer experiences, work experiences, projects or participation in different societies are all good examples of tasks that require dedication and purpose.

Potential employers want to know that they're investing in someone who won't get up and leave at a moment's notice. Having references to back you up only makes you more credible.

Supports your resumé
Anyone can make claims on a resumé. While you can't have a reference for every single item on your resumé, having a variety of references for different skills — organizational skills, leadership skills, marketing skills — makes every part of your resumé more substantial.

If you have different contacts to pull from, then you also have the ability to tailor your references to each job application.

This can give you an edge and makes you more employable.

Demonstrating initiative

Employers have a large selection of applicants to choose from during the hiring process.

- When you're trying to get your foot in the door, a well-rounded selection of references may help you overcome a lack of specific experience or a less-developed skill set.

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SPORTS 4

Newest Lightning player a dapper dude

NBL Canada. McDowell dresses for success, but how will he look on the hardwood after layoff?

DAVE LANGFORD
dave.langford@metronews.ca

He has been sitting near the London bench each of the past five games, dressed in the finest haute couture.

He has even given his new boss, London Lightning head coach Micheal Ray Richardson, a run for his money in the courtside battle for sartorial splendour.

But now, Lightning newcomer Stephen McDowell will be switching from his own wardrobe to the team uniform for Thursday's game as the Lightning lock horns with the Brampton A's in a battle for first place in the National Basketball League of Canada. Game time is 7 p.m.

McDowell, a five-foot-11 guard from Indiana, had been forced to wait for Canada Basketball clearance to begin playing with the Lightning, hence the five-game hiatus. That approval came Monday.

"It's really the players kidding the coach, just saying that I outdress him or whatever," McDowell said before practice Tuesday. "I don't think that's the case. The coach is always dressed well every game."

Richardson dismisses any talk of a wardrobe battle.

"I don't think he's outdressing me," Richardson said. "I just think he's being a professional. And showing a little style."

No matter what he wears, Richardson said McDowell will be a help to the team.

"He's a great offensive player. He's quick. He's a game changer," Richardson said. "When he played here against us, he scored 30 so I know that he can score, can create his own shot and he can pass."

McDowell played for Summerside, P.E.I., two seasons ago and scored 29 points during one game in London. Richardson doesn't forget these things.

For his part, McDowell is impressed with what he has seen, albeit from the outside looking in.

"We have a very talented team. Everybody can run. Very athletic," McDowell, 28, said. "It's really a good group of guys.

"I've never been with a team like this when everybody gets along and really cares for each other and wants each other to succeed. I'm just excited to do anything I can to get some wins."

A phone call with Richardson brought McDowell to London after he failed to get a work permit in Switzerland to play for the Geneva Lions. He has not been playing since last December.

"I feel like God opened this door and this is just an opportunity for me to continue to play and do what I love to do," McDowell said.

Stephen McDowell goes up for two during a scrimmage at London Lightning practice on Tuesday. ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Skiing

Decision to sit out Sochi leaves Vonn 'devastated'

Lindsey Vonn will miss the Sochi Olympics because of a right knee injury, leaving the Winter Games without one of its biggest stars.

The 29-year-old skier from Vail, Colo., announced her decision Tuesday, exactly one month before the opening ceremony in Russia. Her personal publicist, Lewis Kay, said in a statement Vonn will have surgery "shortly."

In a Facebook posting, Vonn said she is "devastated" to miss the Olympics, "but the reality has sunk in that my knee is just too unstable to compete at this level." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Cavs get better, Bulls save cash in Deng-Bynum swap

With their season quickly sliding toward yet another trip to the NBA lottery, the Cleveland Cavaliers had to do something to slow their freefall toward irrelevance.

The Cavs acquired Luol Deng, a two-time all-star small forward with Chicago, early Tuesday in a trade from the Bulls for Andrew Bynum.

As expected, the Bulls waived Bynum, who has chronically bad knees and has played just 24 games the past two seasons. Bynum was due another $6 million on the $24 million, two-year contract he signed with Cleveland in July, and the Bulls would have had to pay him if he was kept past Tuesday at 5 p.m.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OVERTIME
with Micheal Ray Richardson
Get on the inside track with the London Lightning as Metro's Dave Langford chats with coach and former NBA star Micheal Ray, every week at metronews.ca
metro
metronews.ca

Jeff Carter cracked Team Canada's 25-man roster for the Sochi Olympics. Fellow London native Drew Doughty also made the team, as did former London Knights Rick Nash, Corey Perry and John Tavares. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Team Canada staff stands by final choices

Olympic hockey. Kunitz, Marleau, Carter among questioned picks with likes of St. Louis, Giroux on outside looking in

Canada's 25-man roster

Goalies. Roberto Luongo, Carey Price, Mike Smith.

Defencemen. Jay Bouwmeester, Drew Doughty, Dan Hamhuis, Duncan Keith, Alex Pietrangelo, P.K. Subban, Marc-Edouard Vlasic, Shea Weber.

Forwards. Jamie Benn, Patrice Bergeron, Jeff Carter, Sidney Crosby, Matt Duchene, Ryan Getzlaf, Chris Kunitz, Patrick Marleau, Rick Nash, Corey Perry, Patrick Sharp, Steven Stamkos, John Tavares, Jonathan Toews.

For more than four months, Team Canada's management staff anguished over these decisions.

Still, it took until 1 a.m. ET Tuesday — 10 hours before the team was to be unveiled — for executive director Steve Yzerman and his staff to come up with a final 25-man roster for the Sochi Olympics.

"We had gone out last night for dinner and came back. We were down to a couple of names and it was a real strong, healthy debate," St. Louis Blues general manager Doug Armstrong said. "At some point we had to stop at 25. When we got to that last name, we shook hands and said we're excited about this team."

With another gold medal the only measure of success, Yzerman, Armstrong and the rest of the management team read off names one by one, listing the group they hope will get the job done. Chris Kunitz, Patrick Marleau and Jeff Carter had their names called, while Claude Giroux, Logan Couture, Martin St. Louis and many others got phone calls from the staff delivering the bad news.

"The calls this morning to the guys that weren't making it, those are real difficult calls," Boston Bruins GM Peter Chiarelli said at Tuesday's news conference. "It kind of leaves an empty feeling in your stomach."

As difficult as those decisions and conversations were, they were necessary.

In the final analysis, Canada chose to put together a team of "different dimensions," in the words of Detroit Red Wings GM Ken Holland. Kunitz brings natural chemistry with Sidney Crosby, Marleau a mix of speed and scoring and Carter a nose for the net.

By the time the management team — made up of Yzerman, Holland, Chiarelli, Armstrong, Kevin Lowe, Hockey Canada executive Brad Pascall and coach Mike Babcock — got down to the final meeting, there was a general consensus on all three goaltenders, seven defencemen and 11 or 12 forwards.

Then it got down to brass tacks.

"The decisions, the late-night wrangling, it's like you go over things four, five, six, seven times," Chiarelli said. "Is this the right reason? Is this the right guy? What's the right reason? We talked about four or five guys at the end, and you have second thoughts, and you just got to be firm on what you believe and the fit."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	42	28	12	2	124	89	58
Montreal	44	25	14	5	114	103	55
Tampa Bay	42	25	13	4	119	100	54
Detroit	43	19	14	10	114	121	48
Toronto	43	21	17	5	119	127	47
Ottawa	44	19	18	7	126	141	45
Florida	43	16	21	6	102	136	38
Buffalo	42	12	26	4	74	118	28

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	44	31	12	1	142	103	63
Philadelphia	42	21	17	4	111	116	46
Washington	42	20	16	6	128	128	46
Carolina	43	18	16	9	105	124	45
N.Y. Rangers	44	21	20	3	108	119	45
Columbus	43	19	20	4	117	126	42
New Jersey	43	17	18	8	101	110	42
N.Y. Islanders	44	15	22	7	119	146	37

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	45	29	7	9	167	124	67
St. Louis	41	29	7	5	150	95	63
Colorado	42	26	12	4	123	108	56
Minnesota	44	22	17	5	106	113	49
Dallas	42	20	15	7	123	131	47
Winnipeg	45	19	21	5	123	135	43
Nashville	43	18	19	6	102	129	42

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	44	31	8	5	146	111	67
San Jose	43	27	10	6	142	111	60
Los Angeles	43	26	13	4	113	89	56
Vancouver	44	23	13	8	117	108	54
Phoenix	41	20	12	9	123	127	49
Calgary	42	15	21	6	100	131	36
Edmonton	45	14	26	5	117	156	33

Note: Two points for a win, one point for an overtime or shootout loss.

Tuesday's results
Carolina at Buffalo (ppd., storm)
N.Y. Islanders at Toronto
Philadelphia at New Jersey
Tampa Bay at Winnipeg
San Jose at Nashville
Calgary at Phoenix
St. Louis at Edmonton
Boston at Anaheim
Pittsburgh at Vancouver
Minnesota at Los Angeles

Monday's results
Calgary 4 Colorado 3
Columbus 4 N.Y. Rangers 3 (SO)
Montreal 2 Florida 1
N.Y. Islanders 7 Dallas 3

Wednesday's games — All Times Eastern
Montreal at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Ottawa at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.

Thursday's games
Dallas at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Florida at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Washington at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Anaheim at Nashville, 8 p.m.
St. Louis at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Boston at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.
Detroit at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pgh	23	40	63
Kane, Chi	23	31	54
Tavares, NYI	20	31	51
Getzlaf, Ana	20	28	48
Thornton, SJ	5	43	48
Kunitz, Pgh	23	24	47
Sharp, Chi	25	21	46
Backstrom, Wash	10	36	46

Not including last night's games

NFL PLAYOFFS

WILD CARD WEEKEND

Sunday's results
AFC — San Diego 27 Cincinnati 10
NFC — San Francisco 23 Green Bay 20

Saturday's results
AFC — Indianapolis 45 Kansas City 44
NFC — New Orleans 26 Philadelphia 24

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Saturday's games — All Times Eastern
NFC — New Orleans at Seattle, 4:35 p.m.
AFC — Indianapolis at New England, 8:15 p.m.

Sunday's games
NFC — San Francisco at Carolina, 1:05 p.m.
AFC — San Diego at Denver, 4:40 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

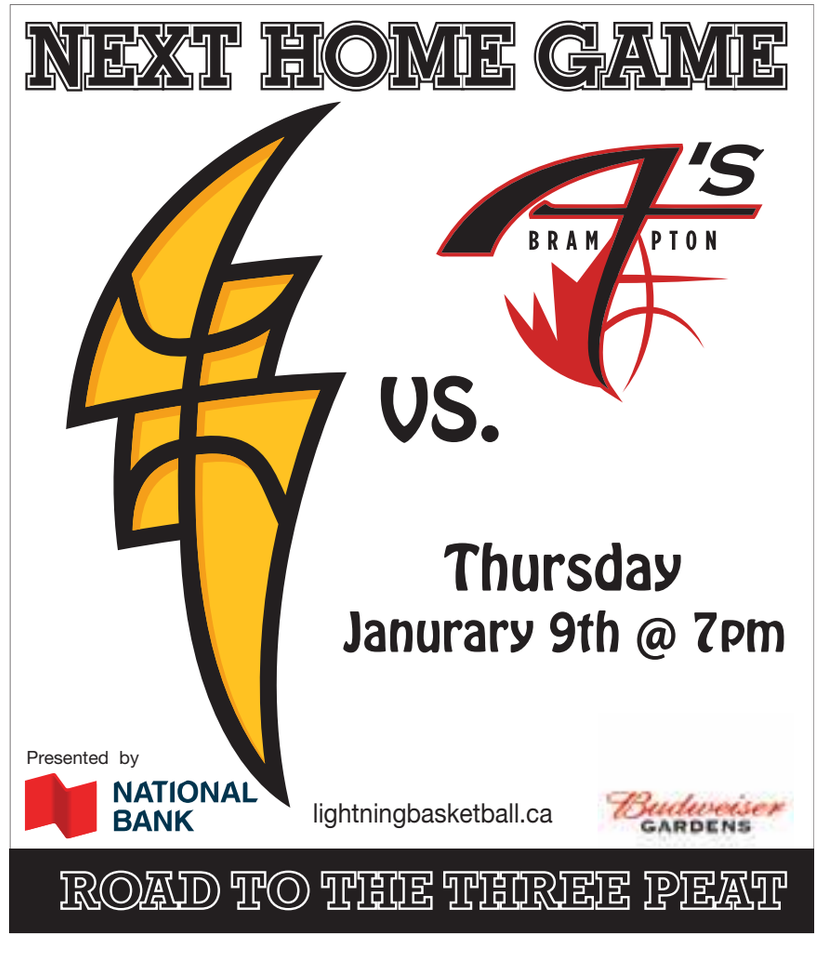
	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	27	6	.818	—
d-Miami	26	8	.765	1½
Atlanta	18	17	.514	10
d-Toronto	16	16	.500	10½
Washington	14	17	.452	12
Chicago	14	18	.438	12½
Charlotte	15	20	.429	13
Detroit	14	20	.412	13½
Brooklyn	13	21	.382	14½
Boston	13	21	.382	14½
Philadelphia	12	22	.353	15½
New York	11	22	.333	16
Cleveland	11	23	.324	16½
Orlando	10	24	.294	17½
Milwaukee	7	26	.212	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Oklahoma City	27	7	.794	—
Portland	26	8	.765	1
d-San Antonio	26	8	.765	1
d-L.A. Clippers	24	13	.649	4½
Golden State	23	13	.639	5
Houston	22	13	.629	5½
Phoenix	20	12	.625	6
Dallas	19	15	.559	8
Minnesota	17	17	.500	10
Denver	16	17	.485	10½
New Orleans	15	17	.469	11
Memphis	15	18	.455	11½
L.A. Lakers	14	20	.412	13
Sacramento	10	22	.313	16
Utah	11	25	.306	17

Tuesday's results
Philadelphia at Cleveland
Toronto at Indiana
Washington at Charlotte
New Orleans at Miami
Detroit at New York
Phoenix at Chicago
Golden State at Milwaukee
San Antonio at Memphis
L.A. Lakers at Dallas
Boston at Denver
Oklahoma City at Utah
Portland at Sacramento

Wednesday's games — All Times Eastern
Detroit at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Dallas at San Antonio, 7 p.m.
Golden State at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Houston, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at Minnesota, 9:30 p.m.
Orlando at Portland, 10 p.m.
Boston at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.



DRIVE

Santa Fe takes on a snowstorm

Review. A 300-plus kilometre night-time trek in treacherous weather reveals the Hyundai model's winter prowess

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
drive@metronews.ca

PHOTO: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

2014 Hyundai Santa Fe

- **Type.** Four-door, front-wheel-drive compact wagon
- **Engines (hp).** 2-litre four cylinder, turbocharged and direct injected (264)
- **Transmissions.** 6-speed automatic
- **Base price (incl. destination).** $26,599

Tires

All wheel drive, ABS brakes and electronic stability control DO NOT make traction. The only way to increase the physical grip between a vehicle and a slippery road is with proper tires. Electronic aids or not, riding all-season tires in conditions like these would result in poor directional stability.

Xenon lights

My only complaint: xenon lights are typically great in a snowstorm. The ones in the Santa Fe were adequate, not mind-blowing. In clear conditions, they're more than adequate. For some reason, the light output diminishes notably when there's even a small amount of snow or ice on the lenses — and there's no washer system.

Mother Nature was all crabby-pants during my recent December test of the latest Hyundai Santa Fe, so she dumped about two feet of snow all over my hometown, then made the mercury plummet like Miley Cyrus's artistic standards.

Temperatures landed somewhere around 30 below, which is (delightfully) too cold for road salt to work. Prior to this, there was snow. Lots of snow. The second big, "all-night-long" dumping of the season. It left over a foot on the ground.

Naturally, I did what I always do when there's an all-night-long dumping of snow up here in Sudbury, Ont. I grabbed some buddies, some large double-doubles, and drove repeatedly around every unplowed back road I could find.

A few nights after this, I travelled 300 kilometres down Highway 69 after dark. That distance was spread evenly between extreme cold over frozen hard-packed ice-stripes and then slightly warmer temperatures accompanied by zero-visibility, blowing snow, and deep powder. A few noteworthy points about the wintertime driving experience of the tested 2013 Santa Fe 2.0T Limited AWD came to light in the process.

Proper ESC Calibration

In many winter situations, wheelspin is a good thing– and most of the time, the ESC in the Santa Fe allows enough of it. Wheelspin allows snow to be flung from the treads for better contact with the ground beneath the tires — so when you give Santa Fe the boots coming out of a parking lot and onto a busy street, it lets the wheels spin a little faster than they can grip to ensure you get moving quickly. In real life, this is more favorable than overly aggressive ESC systems that numb the throttle at any sign of wheelspin, cross their arms, report your activities to the fun police, and leave you throttleless in front of traffic. Ultimately, you'll feel like you're calling the shots, not the vehicle — and that's a good thing.

Hill Start Assist

Stop on a hill, and Santa Fe freezes the pressure in the brake lines for a few seconds while your foot moves from the brakes to the gas. This prevents rollback, makes life easier for the transmission, and also makes it far more likely that you'll get moving again after being stopped on an icy incline. After all, nothing's more embarrassing than holding up traffic while you spin all four tires and slide backwards like a sucker. The tester wore Hankook Winter I-Cept Evo tires in its 19-inch OEM size. I found them a nicely balanced all-round winter performance tire. They're perhaps slightly more slippery during hard braking and acceleration than a Michelin X-Ice or Pirelli Sottozero, but they are remarkably stable in a straight line and while steering.

AWD Done Right

Santa Fe's AWD system is clever and well set up for driving in nasty winter weather. The AWD system uses inputs from numerous sensors to pre-engage 4-wheel power in many situations when accelerating from a stop. Even with extremely light throttle in deep snow, it'll often power all four wheels from a stand still — preemptively increasing traction instead of letting the front wheels slip before engaging the rear ones. Otherwise, when the system brings the rear wheels online for propulsion, they engage quickly–within about 2 or 3 revolutions of the front wheels, and get a good share of engine power. This AWD system isn't shy about calling the rear wheels into play, and when all four tires spin, power is split actively to maximize extraction of available traction. There's even a 'lock' setting to pre-set the system into a 50/50 power split, though I never needed to use it. No issues with needless tire spinning or harshness during shifting power between the front and rear. In virtually any situation, this setup feels like it knows what it's doing.

Finally

After arriving at my destination, there was approximately 147 pounds of salty brown filthy road-guck frozen to the underside of the Santa Fe's front doors. Thankfully, those front doors actually cover the structural rocker panel where this frozen mess typically accumulates on most rides. Open the door, and the mess goes with it, revealing a clean-as-a-whistle surface to step over and keeping your pants clean.

Limited time 2.9% semi-monthly lease offered through Toyota Financial Services on approved credit to qualified retail customers on all new 2014 Corolla models. First semi-monthly payment due at lease inception and next semi-monthly payment due approximately 15 days later and semi-monthly thereafter throughout the term. Toyota Financial Services will waive the final semi-monthly payment. Semi-monthly lease offers not open to employees of Toyota Canada, Toyota Financial Services or TMMC/TMMC Vehicle Purchase Plan. Some conditions apply. See www.toyota.ca or your Toyota dealer for complete details. Example (applies across Canada except Quebec): 2014 Corolla CE 6M with a vehicle price of $17,515 (including $1,520 freight/PDI) leased at 2.9% over 60 months with $1,495 down payment equals 120 semi-monthly payments of $89 with a cost of borrowing of $1,672.60 and a total obligation of $12,327.40. $0 security deposit and first semi-monthly payment due at lease inception. Price and total obligation exclude license, insurance, registration, fees and taxes. 100,000 km allowance for 60 months, with ability to purchase additional kilometres at $0.05/km at time of lease inception, and a charge of $0.07/km for excess kilometres. Dealer may lease for less.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
This is one of those days when you would rather be anywhere than where you are supposed to be. If you can find a legit way out of the situation then go for it. But if you fail to turn up, you could create a powerful enemy.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Honest effort gets results, so keep plugging away at what you are working on and don't get dispirited if results are slow. Nothing you do is wasted and one day soon you will make that breakthrough you long for.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
It may appear as if someone is being deliberately obstructive, but you should ask yourself if there was something you said or did that could have turned them against you. If so, it's not too late to say sorry.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Why are you pessimistic about your prospects? You may not have gotten everything you wanted recently but there is always tomorrow. You'll feel positive closer to the weekend.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
No matter how unsettling the changes that are taking place may be, keep telling yourself that in the long-term they will work in your favour. Your life story is unfolding as it should.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Do something today that livens things up both at home and at work. Some may think you lost your senses but they are just the sort of people who have been dragging you down.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is an important time for you and you will be making major changes to your lifestyle. The full moon on the 16th will clear away obstacles. Between now and then, plan big.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
It seems you have made an error of judgment and all you can do is say sorry. If you sound sincere, others will forgive you and you can move on. But if your apology is grudging, bad feelings are likely to linger.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Most times your hunches are spot on but the planets warn your instincts are not to be trusted today, so take care. This is one of those occasions when you must stick to facts.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Your relationship with authority may not be as good as it should be today, so watch what you say and be ready to back off if a conversation gets heated. You'll be the loser if it gets ugly.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may think someone is keeping something from you, but don't let it worry you. It's unlikely to be bad news and it's even possible they are planning some kind of surprise.

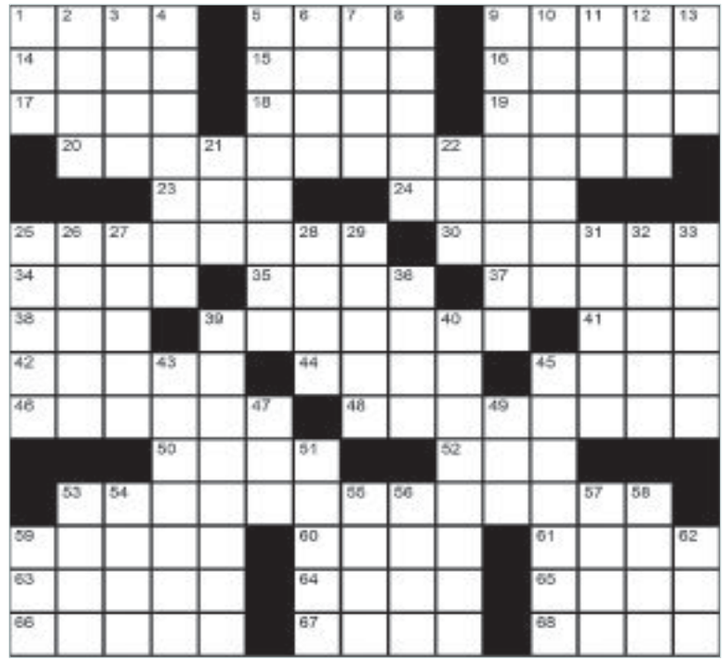
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You must let a certain person know that you have no intention of allowing them to get rich at your expense. Today's Mars-Jupiter link will bring tensions to a head — say what's on your mind.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

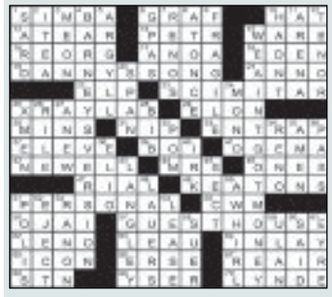
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Country legend Johnny
5. Interlock
9. __ Canada (Pest control company)
14. Vicinity
15. __ sax
16. Husky
17. Canadian actor Raymond
18. T.Rex's style
19. Some ducks
20. The ancient Ichthyosaur, for one: 2 wds.
23. Bear: Spanish
24. Rug sort
25. Ski resort transports
30. The __ Works ('80s band)
34. Lennon's in-laws
35. "...see __ __ believe..."
37. Comedy's Mr. Anderson
38. Orchestra __
39. Old Montreal horse-drawn carriage
41. TV show taper
42. Mo of CBS' "Sunday Morning"
44. "I could __ _ horse!"
45. Gladiator's 1502
46. Waiting to be connected: 2 wds.
48. Alberta community near the Saskatchewan border
50. Mister Ed's hair
52. Slangy put down
53. "Moonstruck" (1987) Canadian director: 2 wds.
59. Hawaiian island
60. Makeover show, "__ on a Dime"
61. Type of mineral
63. "It's _ __ from God!"
64. Ended
65. __ In Canada
66. Quebec 'cup'
67. Jewel's "You __ Meant for Me"
68. Bread spread

Down
1. Fare vehicle
2. Lily kind
3. Evening, in Italy
4. England: London department store
5. Julia in her 1989 'Steel' movie
6. Fashion magazine
7. Celestial body
8. Abodes
9. Barrier
10. Member of Canadian quartet The Tenors, Mr. Pereira
11. Ship part
12. "The Safety Dance" bit: "...can dance __ __ want to..."
13. Albany is its cap.
21. Prefix to 'thermal'
22. Fraternity letter
25. Give up amateur status: 2 wds.
26. Blooming __ (Starter menu item)
27. Top-__ (The best)
28. The Jetty __ __ Havre (Claude Monet painting)
29. Choo-choo-ing stuff
31. Blue Rodeo singer Jim
32. Bon Jovi's "__' on a Prayer"
33. "__, Indiana" (Early-'90s TV series)
36. Prefix to 'gon' (Eight-sided shape)
39. Medicine Cabinet: __ lotion
40. Canadian store HH = Home __
43. Canadian fashion label since 1983
45. "Cityline" 3 Chefs member, Mr. Capra
47. Scientific ID
49. Nintendo game console
51. Fund
53. Rocket org.
54. Nons opposites
55. Bee Gees' "__ Talkin'"
56. Rarely, hardly __
57. __ agreement
58. Connecting point
59. Nightspot in Broadway musical Cabaret, Kit __ Klub
62. New

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

		9				5		
				3		6		2
5			4	9			3	
			6					1
		2	3		1	8		
3					7			
	2			4	5			6
6		8		1				
		1				7		

Yesterday's Sudoku

2	5	8	6	1	3	7	4	9
9	1	6	4	8	7	3	2	5
7	3	4	9	2	5	1	6	8
8	6	5	2	3	9	4	7	1
4	9	3	5	7	1	6	8	2
1	2	7	8	6	4	9	5	3
5	4	1	7	9	8	2	3	6
6	7	9	3	5	2	8	1	4
3	8	2	1	4	6	5	9	7

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